

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) A hollow rack shaft which is formed cylindrically by bending a straight plate having wider and narrower width parts so that two sides of the plate are joined, wherein in a part of a surface of the plate a row of rack teeth is formed along a direction of an axis of the plate, and wherein:

cl
said rack shaft is provided with a first area and second areas on both sides of said first area;

wherein in said first area, the row of rack teeth and a semi-cylindrical part on a reverse side of the row of rack teeth are formed; and

in each of said second areas, a respective complete cylindrical part is formed and at least one of the ~~second areas~~ respective complete cylindrical parts has a an outer diameter ~~different from a smaller than an outer~~ diameter of the semi-cylindrical part in said first ~~area.~~ area;

~~wherein a diameter of at least one of said second areas is smaller than a diameter of said first area.~~

14-15. (Cancelled)
